

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CITIZENS

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, February 22, 2006 – 6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers, 2nd Floor

Westerly Town Hall

1. 6:04 PM – CALL TO ORDER

Present: Robert Ritacco, Co-Chair; Gail Mallard, Co-Chair; Chaplin Barnes; M. Ann Lamb; Richard Smith; Joseph MacAndrew; Harrison Day; Thomas Toscano, Jr.; Rita H. Deane; Charles Vacca; William Haase; Thomas J. Liguori, Jr.; and Richard C. Anthony
Linda C. Hebert, Recording Secretary

Absent: Jonathan Eckel; Brian McCuin; Nicholas Castagna; David Gervasini; Richard D. Comolli; Robert J. Brockmann; M'liss Crotty Chapman; Joseph T. Turo, Esquire, Town Manager; and Anthony Giordano

Co-Chair Ritacco called the meeting to order.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 2/8/06 MEETING

Motion by Mr. Liguori, seconded by Mr. Smith, that the aforesaid minutes be accepted and approved as printed. Unanimously approved by the Committee.

3. SPEAKER – JOHN O'BRIEN, CHIEF, STATEWIDE PLANNING PROGRAM

Mr. O'Brien indicated that the Comprehensive Plan is over ten years old. State law requires that communities look at the Plan after five years. The State used to provide money for updates, but does not have any monies available any longer. He suggested bringing the Town up to compliance by submitting the minimum required to get the State certification back in place and then proceeding with a full rewrite of the current Comprehensive Plan. There is no downside to this two-step process, and the Town will be in a better position to deal with consultants. Mr. O'Brien also wants this Committee to be sure that the Comprehensive Plan and Town's zoning are consistent.

Mr. Haase indicated that he has filled in many parts of the Five-Year Summary Update. He would like to make this available to members via e-mail for the next meeting.

Motion by Ms. Lamb, seconded by Mr. Day, that the Committee proceed with the two-step process as outlined by Mr. O'Brien. Unanimously approved by the Committee.

4. COMMITTEE PROCEDURES

Co-Chair Mallard indicated that she and Co-Chair Ritacco had been in contact with Town Solicitor Steven Hartford with regard to committee procedures. The following questions were asked by the Co-Chairs and answered by the Town Solicitor:

a) What constitutes a “quorum”?

A simple majority of voting majority of members will constitute a quorum.

b) Can liaison and ex-officio members vote?

Ex-officio members may not vote. These are typically Town staff. Liaisons are not voting members unless designated as regular members by the Town Council.

c) Are votes public or via secret ballot?

All votes must be taken in open session and recorded in the minutes. Secret or closed ballots are not permitted under the open meetings act.

d) Do we follow Roberts’ Rules or some other set of guidelines?

Roberts’ Rules should be the guide.

e) What do we do about a potential conflict of interest?

There is no simple answer to this question. The general rule is a member should not participate in or vote on an issue that might provide direct or indirect financial gain to himself/herself, a family member or business associate. Where a member feels that there is a conflict he/she should recuse on the record or seek an advisory opinion from the state ethics commission. These matters are best dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

f) What guidelines exist, if any, for convening an executive session of the committee?

There will likely be no occasion under which this committee should convene an executive session.

Mr. Haase has requested that all members' questions to him be directed to him through the Co-Chairs, and his answers will also go to the members through the Co-Chairs.

Copies of Town Council Resolution approving \$3,000 for copies of the current Comprehensive Plan, copies of current Zoning Ordinances and copies of Vision 2025 – the State Guide Plan were distributed to each member. Motion made by Mr. Day, seconded by Mr. Barnes, to appoint Mr. Smith as Treasurer of this Committee. Unanimously approved by the Committee.

5. SET MEETING SCHEDULE

The following meeting dates were set: Thursday, March 9; Wednesday, March 22; Thursday, April 6; and Thursday, April 20, 2006. All meetings will start at 6:00 PM and will be held in Town Council Chambers, unless some other place may be designated.

Co-Chairs have indicated that they would like to try and keep the meeting times to approximately two hours, if possible.

6. OTHER ITEMS RAISED BY THE COMMITTEE

The Board of Finance favorably received the request for \$85,000 for consultants. It will now go before the Town Council.

Motion made by Mr. Liguori, seconded by Mr. Smith, to have copies of Mr. Haase's response to the Service and Facilities Element by next meeting. Unanimously approved by the Committee.

Mr. Smith suggested adding to a future agenda Putting Together a Schedule for "Phase I".

Motion made by Mr. Liguori, seconded by Mr. Anthony, that Co-Chairs request, from the Superintendent of Schools, a projected school enrollment synopsis on a five- and twenty-year basis and an executive summary of projected facilities needs (Vision 2025 – second phase). Unanimously approved by the Committee.

Motion made by Mr. Liguori, seconded by Mr. Barnes, that Co-Chairs also ask the Superintendent of Utilities for any such existing documents with respect to sewer and water projections for the Town. Unanimously approved by the Committee.

Motion made by Mr. Liguori, seconded by Mr. Day, that Co-Chairs ask the Public Works Garage Committee for its synopsis and any projected future expenditures and the Police Station Committee for

its synopsis and any projected future expenditures. Unanimously approved by the Committee.

7. HEARING OF THE PUBLIC/COMMITTEE RESPONSE

The Committee wants the current Comprehensive Plan scanned, as well as photocopied. Mr. Haase and Ms. Hebert to obtain quotes on printing twenty-five copies of the Comprehensive Plan, the current Zoning Ordinances and Vision 2025 – the State Guide Plan, as well as scanning the Comprehensive Plan. Suggestion was made by Ms. Deane to put the Comprehensive Plan on the Town’s website.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Ms. Lamb, seconded by Mr. Anthony, to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 PM. Unanimously approved by the Committee.

ATTEST:

Linda C. Hebert

Recording Secretary